

CLAIMS:

1. A group-browsing system comprising:

a plurality of clients each including a shared web browser;

a server linked to the shared web browser of each client and configured to monitor the transmission of a web site URL request from the shared web browser of one client of the group and to direct that request to the shared web browser of other clients in the group; and

a gatekeeper module configured to first mask the identity of each client

computer to prevent the web site from retrieving any client's actual identifier and to second create the same temporary identifier for each client when any client logs on to the web site so that the same web page is displayed for all the clients in the group.

2. The system of claim 1 in which the group-browsing system is a scalable secure system.

3. The system of claim 1 in which the gatekeeper module resides on each client.

4. The system of claim 1 in which the identifier is a cookie and the temporary identifier is a temporary cookie.

5. The system of claim 1 in which the gatekeeper further including means for deleting the temporary identifier at the end of a group-browsing session to prevent any client from returning to the web site identified as another client.

6. The system of claim 1 in which the gatekeeper further including means for generating a warning message when any client logs on to the web site to inform that client that the other clients in the group will now be able to access that clients private information.

7. The system of claim 1 further including means for tracking the actions of all the clients for billing purposes.

8. The system of claim 1 further including client software configured to detect the end of a group-browsing session and, in response, to direct a client's secure browser to transmit the web site URL to allow the client to return to the previously accessed web site.

9. A gatekeeper system for group-browsing, the system comprising:

means for masking the identity of each group member to prevent a web site from retrieving any group member's actual identifier; and
means for creating a temporary identifier for each member of the group so that the same web page is displayed for all group members.

10. The system of claim 9 in which the identifier is a cookie and the temporary identifier is a temporary cookie.

11. The system of claim 9 further including means for deleting the temporary identifier at the end of the group-browsing session.

12. A group-browsing system comprising:

a shared web browser for each client of a group of clients; and
a gatekeeper module configured:
first to mask the identity of each group member using a shared web browser to prevent a web site from retrieving any group member's actual identifier,
second to create a temporary identifier for each member of the group so that the same web page is displayed for all group members,
third to automatically establish a non-shared browser when a client enters a secure server,

fourth to automatically transfer the temporary identifier to the non-shared browser, and

fifth to delete the temporary identifier at the end of the group-browsing session to prevent any client from returning to the web site as another client.

13. The system of claim 12 in which the identifier is a cookie, the temporary identifier is a temporary cookie, and the secure server is a checkout server.

14. A group-browsing method for a plurality of clients each including a shared web browser, the method comprising:

linking a server to the shared web browser of each client;

using the server to monitor the transmission of a web site URL request from the shared web browser of one client of the group and to direct the request to the shared web browser of other clients in the group;

masking the identity of each client computer to prevent the web site from retrieving any client's actual identifier; and

creating the same temporary identifier for each client when any client logs on to the web site so that the same web page is displayed for all the clients in the group.

15. The method of claim 14 in which the identifier is a cookie and the temporary identifier is a temporary cookie.

16. The method of claim 14 further including deleting the temporary identifier at the end of a group-browsing session to prevent any client from returning to the web site identified as another client.

17. The method of claim 14 in which the step of configuring the gatekeeper further including generating a warning message when any client logs on to the web site to inform that

client that the other clients in the group will now be able to access that client's private information.

18. The method of claim 14 further including tracking the actions of all the clients for billing purposes.

19. The method of claim 14 further including configuring a client software to detect the end of a group-browsing session and, in response, directing a client's secure browser to transmit the web site URL to allow the client to return to the previously accessed web site.

20. A group-browsing method comprising:

masking the identity of each group member to prevent a web site from retrieving any group member's actual identifier; and

creating a temporary identifier for each member of the group so that the same web page is displayed for all group members.

21. The method of claim 20 in which the identifier is a cookie and the temporary identifier is a temporary cookie.

22. The method of claim 20 further including deleting the temporary identifier at the end of the group-browsing session.

23. A group-browsing method comprising:

masking the identity of each group member using a shared web browser to prevent a web site from retrieving any group member's actual identifier;

creating a temporary identifier for each member of the group so that the same web page is displayed for all group members;

establishing a non-shared browser when a client enters a secure server;

transferring the temporary identifier to the non-shared browser; and
deleting the temporary identifier at the end of the group-browsing session to
prevent any client from returning to the web site as another client.

24. The method of claim 23 in which the identifier is a cookie, the temporary
identifier is a temporary cookie, and the secure server is a checkout server.